

UNCLASSIFIED

Department of State

11/15/78

TELEGRAM

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ACTION KA-05

BUENOS 05384 141300Z

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INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 10-13 130-00 CA-01 A10-05 EB-00
TRSE-00 OMB-01 ABF-01 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
SS-15 NSC-05 /078 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6483
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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BUENOS AIRES 5384

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ICR, AR, SHUM, SREF
SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS APPEAL FOR SUPPORT
FOR ARGENTINE PROGRAM

REF: A) GENEVA 9935; B) GENEVA 10238

1. I URGE THE DEPARTMENT'S SUPPORT FOR THE RED CROSS
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE'S HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS IN
ARGENTINA. THE ICRC REPORTS TO US THAT AFTER A STORMY
BEGINNING, IT HAS REACHED AGREEMENT WITH THE ARGENTINE
GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW THE ICRC FULL PRIVATE AND FREE ACCESS
TO "NON-CRIMINAL PRISONERS" (I.E., POLITICAL) HELD IN
ARGENTINE JAILS, AS WELL AS THE RIGHT TO MAKE
REPEAT VISITS TO PRISONS AND PERMISSION TO DISTRIBUTE
SUPPLIES AND FUNDS TO DESTITUTE DETAINEES AND THEIR
FAMILIES. THE RED CROSS' ROLE IN TRYING TO IMPROVE
THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS UNDER
WHICH "NONCRIMINAL PRISONERS" ARE HELD IS A VITAL
HUMANITARIAN EFFORT WHICH DESERVES OUR FULL SUPPORT.

2. THE RED CROSS HAS BEGUN TO
HAVE ACCESS TO POLITICAL PRISONERS BEING HELD AT THE
DISPOSITION OF MILITARY AUTHORITY ("DAM") IN REGULAR
PENAL INSTITUTIONS WHOSE DETENTION IS NOT REGISTERED
OR OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGED BY GOA. SO FAR, THE ICRC HAS
SEEN ABOUT 50 DAM PRISONERS IN CORDOBA, 9 IN RAWSON AND
20 IN RESISTENCIA. (FROM OTHER SOURCES THE EMBASSY HAS
LEARNED THAT THERE ARE UNDER 500 UNRECOGNIZED PRISONERS
IN ARGENTINE MILITARY CAMPS. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS GROUP
IS A MIX OF THOSE RECENTLY DISAPPEARED WHOSE ULTIMATE
FATE HAS NOT YET BEEN DETERMINED, COLLABORATORS BEING
HELD FOR THEIR SAFETY AND OTHER UNDETERMINED CATEGORIES.)

3. THE ICRC'S CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY'S WORK HERE IS
IMPORTANT IN THE EFFORT TO ESTABLISH AN ACCURATE NUMBER
OF QUOTE DISAPPEARED UNQUOTE IN ARGENTINA. REFTEL B
REPORTS THAT THE CURRENT ICRC FILES CONTAIN MORE THAN
20,000 CARDS OF DETAINED AND MISSING PERSONS IN
ARGENTINA. THE ICRC IS PLANNING TO RELEASE SOON A LIST
OF 800 WELL-DOCUMENTED DISAPPEARANCE CASES, A NUMBER OF
WHOM DID NOT APPEAR IN THE MAY LA PRENSA ADVERTISEMENT.

4. THE ICRC HAS BEEN TRULY RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF
DETAINEES AND THEIR FAMILIES. IN SOME ARMY COMMAND AREAS
IN ARGENTINA, THE ICRC REPRESENTATIVE IS THE ONLY
CONTACT THAT A PRISONER HAS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD. SUCH
VISITS ARE OF ENORMOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT TO THE
DETAINEES, AS WELL AS THEIR FAMILIES. THE ICRC
COMMUNICATES WITH EACH FAMILY AS REQUESTED BY THE DETAINEE.
IN MANY PRISONS, THE RED CROSS DOCTOR IS THE MAJOR SOURCE
OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE DETAINEES.

5. THE REGIONAL OFFICE WILL EXPAND ITS ARGENTINE PROGRAM.
IN 1978, THE ICRC DELEGATES PLAN TO VISIT THE LARGE

PERISON FACILITIES THREE TIMES AND THE SMALLER FACILITIES
TWICE. THE RED CROSS WISHES TO EXPAND ITS FOOD AND RELIEF
PROGRAM FOR DESTITUTE DETAINEES, MANY OF WHOM HAVE NO
FUNDS TO BUY THE SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD STUFFS IN THOSE PRISONS
WHERE SUCH SALES ARE ALLOWED. THE RED CROSS ALSO WISHES
TO EXPAND ITS FOOD DELIVERY PROGRAM TO THE FAMILIES OF
DETAINED PRISONERS. BECAUSE OF THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS
INVOLVED, THE RED CROSS CANNOT DEPEND ON ITS ARGENTINE

AG-029

COUNTERPART NOR ON PRIVATE INDUSTRY FOR SUPPORT IN THIS
RELIEF EFFORT.

6. IN SUMMARY, THE RED CROSS EFFORT HERE IS MAKING AN
IMPORTANT CONCRETE HUMANITARIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE
ENHANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THIS COUNTRY. REGARDING THE
RECOGNITION OF CLANDESTINE PRISONERS, THE RED CROSS'
CONTRIBUTION HAS MAJOR POLICY SIGNIFICANCE. WE STRONGLY
ENDORSE THE RED CROSS' SPECIAL APPEAL FOR ADDITIONAL
FUNDS FOR ITS ARGENTINE PROGRAM AND BELIEVE SIGNIFICANT
USG SUPPORT IS WARRANTED. THE AMBASSADOR, WHO IS
PRESENTLY IN WASHINGTON, CONCURS.

HIGGINS

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/TPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

() Release (X) Excise () Deny

Exemption(s): R1

Declassify: (X) In Part () In Full

(X) Classify as C () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date 5/13/01 Declassify on Reason 25X

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